

War Era Story Project 2012

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When the war started in Europe, I was a senior in high school. Suddenly all the male classmates went off to war. Male friends went off to war, and when they came home on leave, it was a whirlwind of dating; later, there was much letter writing. My Dad was an Air Raid Warden and a proud WWI Navy man. He wanted to enlist again, but was too old. My parents invited many service men who were stationed nearby for Sunday and holiday dinners. One would later become my husband.

My speech teacher from high school was teaching public speaking at U.C. to the cadets. My mom called, asking her to choose two nice cadets who would not be able to go home for Christmas, to have dinner at our house. When the two arrived, one of the original ones had been replaced. My dad liked the replacement cadet, and kept in touch with him. At graduation time, Dad suggested Mom and I take the train to attend. It was a two-day coach train ride to Texas. In May 1945, I pinned the wings on my Dad's favorite cadet, now a pilot, and two years later, on April 17, 1947, we were married.

I remember my first encounter with rationing. I had outgrown my current loafers, so I took a razor blade and cut out the toes on them. Then, I was able to use my shoe ration coupon for those heels I wanted so badly. My Mom had a challenge of planning meals around rationing.

The letters I received from my Scottish pen-pals looked like Swiss cheese after the "letter police" got through with them. One of my Scottish pen pals who was in the Royal Navy came to Philadelphia on a LST Landing craft. On leave, he hitchhiked to my parents' house, surprising all of us. We met many people during the war whom we never would have known, and formed many friendships. The U.S. Post Office had a thriving business through ensuing years.

We collected and smashed tin cans for the war effort. My brother would load them onto his red wagon and haul them to the local collection place. Dad saved grease from cooked meats. One large can full was from "Goo Goo," our goose. Dad was a stationary engineer at the power plant in a factory. No one knew the two men who came to see my Dad one day behind closed doors; not even my Mother! After the war was over, he was able to reveal that the men were with the FBI. Since Dad was in charge of the power plant at a defense plant, he had been recruited by the FBI to report any suspicion of sabotage.

VE day, Victory in Europe, was on my birthday, May 8, 1945. VJ day, Victory in Japan, was on August 15, 1945, and I was at the local swimming pool. Some things you always remember.